

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DIWY-01 CU-04 AID-05 SCCT-01 SY-05 IO-13

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SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

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R 142133Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3202

UNCLAS CARACAS 5505

E.O. 1160: N/A

TAGS: PINT VE

SUBJ: AD RESPONDS TO COPEI STATEMENT

REF: CARACAS 5437

1. RESPONDING TO THE OPPOSITION COPEI PARTY'S MAY 12 STATEMENT CRITICIZING THE GOV FOR BREAKING UP A WOMEN'S PROTEST MEETING LAST WEEK, AD SECRETARY GENERAL LUIS PINERUA ORDAZ ON MAY 13 ACCUSED THE COPEYANOS OF HAVING "LOST THEIR HEADS". PINERUA SAID COPEI'S DECISION TO HOLD ANOTHER PROTEST DEMONSTRATION WAS "RIDUCULOUS" AND COULD ONLY BE CONSIDERED A "PROVOCATION". HE STATED, HOWEVER, THAT AD IS NOT GOING TO COMMIT THE SAME ERROR. PINERUA THOUGHT THE COPEYANOS WERE ONLY HURTING THEMSELVES WITH THEIR "DESPERATE EFFORTS" OF THE LAST FEW DAYS AND ATTRIBUTED THIS TO A REALIZATION THAT THEIR ELECTORAL CHANCES WERE DECREASING DAY BY DAY OF POSSIBLY TO THEIR NOT HAVING RECOVERED FROM THE TRAUMA OF THEIR 1973 ELECTORAL DEFEAT. PINERUA SAID THE GOV, DESPITE ITS DISLIKE OF STREET DEMONSTRATIONS, WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH COPEI'S PLANNED PROTEST MARCH.

2. PINERUA SAID THE COPEI STATEMENT WAS A FURTHER INDICATION THAT COPEI HAS ALREADY BEGUN ITS 1978 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.

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NOTING THAT SENATOR LUIS HERRERA CAMPINS, COPEI'S LIKELY

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IN 1978, HAD RECENTLY SAID THAT COPEI HAD TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF THE TIME AVAILABLE IN ORDER TO DEFEAT AD IN 1978, PINERUA RECALLED THAT COPEI HAD SUFFERED THE WORST DEFEAT IN ITS HISTORY IN 1973 DESPITE A LONG, DRAWN-OUT CAMPAIGN. THE AD LEADER SUGGESTED THAT THE COPEI STATEMENT MIGHT BE AN ATTEMPT TO HIDE THE GRAVITY OF A SCANDAL INVOLVING THE SALE OF LAND BY THE WORKERS BANK DURING THE CALDERA ADMINISTRATION THAT HAS BEEN UNCOVERED BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL "AND IN WHICH PROMINENT COPEYANOS APPEAR IMPLICATED."

3. MEANWHILE AD PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS PRESIDENT GONZALO BARRIOS STATED MAY 13 THAT COPEI HAS THE RIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE EVEN THOUGH HE BELIEVES THIS IS BOTHERSOME TO MANY PEOPLE AND UNCOMFORTABLE TO OTHERS. BARRIOS SAID IF COPEI FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO DIALOGUE WITH AD, AS RECENTLY MAINTAINED BY COPEI DEPUTY EDUARDO FERNANDEZ, "IT IS THEIR OWN DOING" BARRIOS AFFIRMED THAT AD REMAINS DISPOSED TO CONTINUE CONTACTS WITH COPEI.

4. COMMENT: PINERUA AND BARRIOS, ALONG WITH OTHER HIGH AD LEADERS, MET WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ EARLY MAY 13. IT WOULD APPEAR FROM THE PINERUA AND BARRIOS STATEMENTS THAT AD HAS DECIDED TO ADOPT A POSTURE OF MODERATION AND SWEET REASONABLENESS IN THE FACE OF COPEI'S CHARGES. ASECIO

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